



### Great Plains Quality Care Coalition Update

Join us for the ***Impact of Aging on Medication Use Webinar***, March 16, 2021, 3:00 - 4:00 pm CT.

[Details and registration.](#) Kristen Carter, PharmD from Lynn's Dakotamart, Pierre, SD will share insights and address the functional changes in normal aging process, common medications typically identified for deprescribing and review practices for medication transitions and quality of life considerations.

*This event is part of the Great Plains Quality Care Coalition/ Medication Safety Collaborative Action Series.*

### Education, Training, Resources

[Visit our GPQIN Event Calendar](#) to access both upcoming and past events.

#### Impact of Aging on Medication Use - Webinar

March 16, 3-4:00 pm CT

[Great Plains Quality Care Coalition: Medication Safety LAN Event]

Speaker: Kristen Carter, PharmD

[Details & registration](#)

#### National Partnership MLN Call: Dementia-related Psychosis

March 23, 12:30 -2pm CT

[Details & registration](#)

CMS [Nursing Home Resource Center](#) serves as a centralized hub with the latest information and guidance.

[CDC's Project Firstline](#) national training collaborative for healthcare infection prevention and control. [Click here for nursing home modules.](#)

### Great Plains QIN Enlisted to Offer Vaccine Support | COVID-19. Influenza. Pneumococcal.

[The CDC's data tracker](#) compiles data from healthcare facilities and public health authorities. It updates daily to report the total number of COVID-19 vaccines that have been distributed to each state and the total number each state has administered. North Dakota and South Dakota have been recognized nationally for their COVID-19 vaccine administration efforts; ranking near the top for administering the highest percentage of vaccines received.

Great Plains QIN was enlisted by CMS to help increase COVID-19, influenza, and pneumococcal vaccination rates in both states. We are excited for this opportunity and hope to build on the successful efforts underway. This is part of a national, cohesive effort funded by CMS; Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organizations (QIN-QIOs) across the country are being tasked to assist.

"We believe if we work together to coordinate messages, share resources and offer joint learning opportunities, we can collectively combat vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccine confidence in our nursing homes and the community at large. We value our partnership and want to work together to reduce duplication and decrease provider burden. If your nursing home or community is currently planning trainings or have projects underway that we could support or promote, please let us know," shared Dee Kaser, RN, CDCES; Great Plains QIN Quality Improvement Advisor.



[Great Plains QIN Vaccination Page](#)

[CMS Toolkit on State Actions to Mitigate COVID-19 Prevalence in Nursing Homes](#). Updated monthly. Includes national best practices, including those from North and South Dakota.

### The GPQIN Performance

**Tracking tool** is an Excel tool that can aggregate monthly auditing activities into one spreadsheet. The tool ties audit results with mitigation efforts and includes a graph feature which can serve as an effective visual for quality improvement meetings and sharing with staff and board members.

- [Performance Tracking Tool Video Tutorial](#)
- [Performance Tracker Excel Template](#)
- [Performance Tracking Video Slide Deck](#)

### [The National Partnership – Dementia Care Resources](#)

Bookmark this site and explore.

### CMS Five Star Rating | Quality Measure Quick Resource Links

- [CMS NH Quality Measures](#)
- [CMS Five Star Quality Rating](#)
- [CMS Care Compare](#)
- [CMS SNF QRP](#)
- [CMS SNF VBP](#)
- [CMS \(MDS\) 3.0 RAI Manual](#)

If you have questions or information to share, contact Great Plains QIN Quality Improvement Advisors, [Dee Kaser, RN, CDES](#), or [Tammy Wagner, RN, LSSGB](#).



## Now is the time for Understanding the Influenza and Pneumonia Vaccination Quality Measures

The Vaccination Quality Measures are the easiest to impact when a facility is looking to improve their Resident Care Quality Measures (QMs). You have the control to assure that 100% of your residents meet the QM as being “assessed and appropriately given” the vaccination!

**TIME SENSITIVE:** For the Influenza QM, the data will be pulled **ONLY once per year and the percentage of residents who were assessed and appropriately given the seasonal influenza vaccine will remain on [CMS Care Compare](#) for the entire next year. In July, the data will be pulled for the current flu season, broadly recognized as October 1 through March 31.** For example, the data pulled in July 2021, will be from the flu season October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. Flu season for your building is specifically recognized as starting when the influenza vaccine is available in your community.

Now is the time to assure that both the Influenza and the Pneumonia Vaccination QMS accurately reflects the vaccination status of your residents. Great Plains QIN developed coding tip sheets for both vaccination measures and a vaccination quality measure checklist of criteria needed to meet these quality measures. These resources have proven helpful in understanding this QM to ensure you get the highest vaccination rate possible – 100%!

- [Influenza Quality Measure Coding Tips \(greatplainsqin.org\)](#)
- [Pneumococcal Quality Measure Coding Tips \(greatplainsqin.org\)](#)
- [Vaccination Quality Measure Checklist \(greatplainsqin.org\)](#)

For questions and assistance, contact [Michelle Lauckner](#) in North Dakota and [Lori Hintz](#) in South Dakota.

## Targeted COVID-19 NH Training Completions Increase for North Dakota & South Dakota

The CMS [Targeted COVID-19 Training for Nursing Homes](#) on the CMS Quality, Safety, and Education Portal (QSEP) webpage has seen a significant uptick in completions since December 2020 across the Great Plains QIN service area. The scenario-based trainings are available on-demand online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are 5 modules for frontline staff and 11 modules for nursing home management. The modules include best practices for containing and preventing the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes. Those that complete the trainings will receive a certificate of completion. [Click here](#) for a tutorial to further explain the registration process. The goal is that every nursing home employee across the United States will complete this training.

Consider incorporating this training in your orientation curriculum, and or using it as re-education resource whenever needed. This would be a great marketing promotion for individual nursing homes that 100% of their employees have completed national training on infection control and prevention. Contact [Lori Hintz](#) or [Michelle Lauckner](#) to know the number of how many staff completed from your facility. Below is the breakdown of training completions for North Dakota and South Dakota as of 2/14/21. **KUDOS!**



	Week of 12/13/2020 (Baseline)		Week of 2/14/2021	
State	Number of NH staff completing training	Number of NHs	Number of NH staff completing training	Number of NHs
North Dakota	1,293	37	2,078	42
South Dakota	1,196	69	7,283	104



### COVID-19 Vaccine Education Webinar designed with a CNA & Frontline Staff Focus

Are you needing another resource to help alleviate team members COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and answer questions using everyday language and in a very respectful way? The [National Association of Health Care Assistants \(NAHCA\)](#) and [AMDA – The Society of Post Acute and Long Term Care Medicine](#) developed a one hour education webinar on the pandemic, the new vaccine and an interactive Q&A with attendees. The focus audience are frontline workers including certified nursing assistants.

- [Click here to access short clips of the webinar.](#)
- [Click here to access the full webinar.](#)



[AHCA & Leading Age Breaking News: 75% nursing home staff vaccination goal by June 30](#)

### Nursing Scope of Practice Review

Nursing staff in nursing homes play many roles in caring for the residents of long-term care facilities. While many of these efforts are guided by common sense and compassionate care, there are legal standards and rules that also must be followed to provide safe and competent nursing practice. Each state has laws in statute that outline scopes of practice and it is prudent for all licensees and facilities to be fully aware of these rules to practice within the confines of the law. It is especially important to be aware of the practice guidance related to roles of leadership and delegation, allowable roles related to assessments, planning of care of actual implementation of plans of care and interventions.

Scope of Practice guidance is available in North and South Dakota via each state's Boards of Nursing on their websites. Contact your state's Board of Nursing for specific questions.



[North Dakota Board of Nursing Contact Directory](#)  
[North Dakota Registered Nurse \(RN\) and Licensed Practical Nurse \(LPN\) Scope of Practice Guidance](#)



[South Dakota Board of Nursing Contact Directory](#)  
[South Dakota Registered Nurse \(RN\) Scope of Practice](#)  
[South Dakota Licensed Practical Nurse \(LPN\) Scope of Practice](#)

## Alzheimer's Death Rate Up 11% During Pandemic

*Alzheimer's Association provides resources to meet new needs during COVID-19; Long term care facilities see light at the end of the tunnel with vaccines*

*Contributed by Alzheimer's Association of Minnesota/North Dakota and South Dakota*



The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the lives of all Americans, but for families facing Alzheimer's and other dementia, the last year has been particularly difficult. From isolation to caregiving issues to illness, the 15,000 North Dakotans and 18,000 South Dakotans living with Alzheimer's have been undoubtedly impacted by this virus, yet new reporting is even more concerning. During the pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has continued to monitor data on "excess deaths" or the number of deaths above what is considered average for a certain time. The data has revealed that the number of deaths attributable to Alzheimer's and dementia during the pandemic is up more than 10% in South Dakota and more than 11% in North Dakota—far exceeding all disease categories as reported by the CDC.

In addition, findings from a Case Western University study, released this month in the *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, found the risk of contracting COVID-19 was twice as high for people in the study with dementia than for those without it—and African Americans had nearly three times the risk of being infected with COVID-19 as Whites did.

"What we're seeing is that communities of color and older populations are disproportionately impacted by both Alzheimer's disease and COVID-19," said Sue Spalding, Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota CEO. "We know that older Americans with underlying health conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes are at increased risk for dementia and COVID-19. The new study also underscores the disparities Black Americans are experiencing. Today, Blacks, women, Hispanic and Latino Americans, Indigenous and LGBTQ members of our community, may also face systemic inequities that can cause health disparities, making them more susceptible to Alzheimer's and to COVID-19. We need closer examination to understand all the potential reasons for these disparities, which is why our research is so important. At the Alzheimer's Association, we are deeply committed to addressing all inequities."

The pandemic has also presented unique challenges for Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers, especially those with family members in assisted-living and other residential care settings. Many of these families have been unable to visit during the pandemic, causing additional stress and growing concerns about the impact social isolation is having on their family member's health and well-being. These pandemic-related challenges may have accelerated disease-related decline and deaths, including:

- Reduced access to physicians and healthcare during the pandemic.
- Greater difficulty in managing comorbid conditions.
- Disruption of steady routines and close care provided by family members and other caregivers.
- Adverse impact of social isolation.

The Alzheimer’s Association has found that 48% of nursing home residents are living with Alzheimer’s or other dementias and, among older adults in assisted living and other residential facilities, 42% or more have some form of Alzheimer’s or other dementia—one reason why these environments have been among the most challenging during the pandemic. But with the vaccination process underway, there is light at the end of the tunnel according to Sarah Lewerer, Director of Nursing at Eagan Pointe Senior Living, Southview Senior Communities. “We’ve been vaccinating both residents and staff, and that number continues to grow,” Lewerer said. “As a result, our residents are now able to begin having visitors. Even so, we are still staying very vigilant with COVID-19 screening, distancing and masks.”

The CDC recommends that front-line health workers and residents and staff in long-term care settings be among the first groups to receive vaccination. “We strongly support the CDC decision to prioritize residents and staff of nursing homes and other long-term care settings to receive vaccines,” said Mollie O’Brien, Alzheimer’s Association Minnesota-North Dakota Chief Strategy Officer. “Many families have shared with us that their loved ones in long-term care are struggling without contact from their families and friends.” O’Brien adds that vaccinations are an important step in protecting the health and safety of those impacted by Alzheimer’s and dementia, especially those populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. She said the vaccination process is a critical first step to reuniting families and helping communities.



The [Alzheimer's Association](https://www.alz.org) is a worldwide health organization dedicated to Alzheimer’s care, support, and research. Its mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer’s and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. The organization offers resources to help protect those living with dementia during the pandemic at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Tips for Dementia Caregivers | alz.org](https://www.alz.org/coronavirus-tips-for-dementia-caregivers), as well as a 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900. Support group and program events can be accessed on the [Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter](https://www.alz.org/minnesota-north-dakota) site.

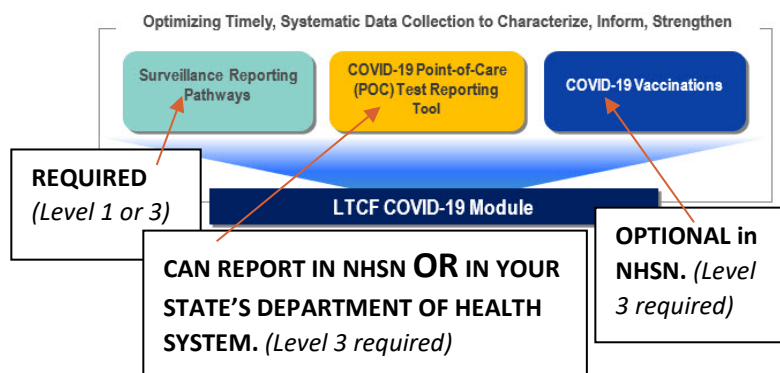


### News, Updates, Tips

Recently there have been quite a few updates and resource additions within **ALL** the NHSN LTCF COVID-19 Modules. The **Surveillance Reporting Pathways is the required NHSN module that nursing homes must report in at least every 7 days.** Additional questions have been added to various pathway sections and a new pathway called *Therapeutics* was added. You will find the table of instructions and reporting forms under the *Data Collection Forms and Instructions* section for each pathway and under the *Training* section you will find the slide sets and recordings. Note: the training recordings seem to be taking a little longer in getting posted. All accessible on the [NHSN COVID-19 LTCF Main Website](https://www.nhsn.gov).

The Surveillance Reporting Pathways include:

- Resident Impact and Facility Capacity
- Staff and Personnel Impact
- Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment
- Ventilator Capacity and Supplies
- **New!** Therapeutics



## NHSN LTCF Quick Links

- [NHSN COVID-19 LTCF Main Website](#)
- [NHSN Frequently Asked Question COVID-19 Data Document](#)
- [NHSN Point of Care Testing Reporting Tool Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [NHSN LTC COVID-19 Module How to Re-Assign the Facility Administrator](#)
- [NHSN LTC COVID-19 How to Add a User](#)

## ADDING ADDITIONAL USERS TO NHSN / LEVEL 1 SECURITY VS LEVEL 3 SECURITY

- Be sure to have a couple people in facility that has access to NHSN.
- A minimum of Level 1 security is needed to report in the required NHSN COVID Surveillance Pathways.
- Enhanced security or Level 3 is required for the Point of Care Test Reporting Module or whenever using other NHSN modules that require entering person level data. This is when you need the SAMS Grid Card.
- New NHSN users start with obtaining Level 1 status first- once you get through this and successfully able to log in NHSN and report in the “required” COVID LTCF Surveillance Pathway Modules – **THEN** request the Enhanced Security (Level 3).

*Why is this important? If you start right away with requesting Level 3 clearance – you will **NOT** have any NHSN access until entire Level 3 process is completed and you have your SAMS grid card in hand. The process is taking well over 30 days or more.*

## HOW DO I GET ADDED AS A NEW USER TO NHSN?

Use this step-by-step guide: [NHSN LTC COVID-19 How to Add a User](#)

### Tips as you go through this process:

- It is a 3-step process for approval in the CDC /NHSN system. First CDC/ NHSN gets you to the SAMS system. Then SAMs is like the gatekeeper or the security system to get you pass the doors to get back into the CDC/ NHSN system.
  - SAMS will be the system that new user will eventually upload their identity proofing documents for Level 3 Security (the SAMS email will explain all of that) and get your SAMS Grid card once identity docs have been approved.
- The NHSN administrator for your facility will need to Log into SAMS as they usually do to begin the process to add new user:
  - Select NHSN Reporting
  - On left-side Navigation pane, select Users > ADD
  - Complete the required fields and click “SAVE”
  - You will then be prompted to assign the new user rights (give new user the fullest rights)
  - Click on “Save”
- Once the process is started and the activation of adding new user as a user for your facility, SAMS will send an email confirmation to new user with directions. New user clicks on a link to agree to the NHSN Rules of Behavior. Once new user agrees to the Rules of Behavior, NHSN will automatically submit an invite to the new user for SAMS authentication. Be patient and wait for these approvals and notifications from SAMS and NHSN. The invites may end up in your junk box so be looking for them.
- **Read all correspondence carefully.** It may take several days, or it may go fast. Keep all correspondence.

## I HAVE NHSN LEVEL 1 SECURITY. HOW DO I GET LEVEL 3 SECURITY?

1. Send email:

**To:** [nhsn@cdc.gov](mailto:nhsn@cdc.gov)

**Subject:** LTCF Enhancing Data Security

**Email Memo:** My name is [NAME] and I am with [FACILITY NAME] [5-digit Facility ID in NHSN]. Our CMS CCN# is [FACILITY CCN#]. I am requesting to obtain Level 3 SAMS access for the NHSN /COVID LTCF and POINT OF CARE (POC) Modules. I am requesting the identity proofing email be sent to me.

[INSERT SIGNATURE LINE/ CONTACT INFORMATION]

2. After you send the email, the CDC/NHSN will give the OK to SAMS to invite you to continue the process. You will receive an email from SAMS, [sams-no-reply@cdc.gov](mailto:sams-no-reply@cdc.gov), and will be provided the next set of instructions. Watch your junk/spam folder. *Please note, you cannot do anything further until you receive the email from SAMS to proceed to the next step. To clarify, SAMS is the system that ensures you are who you say you are and is the gatekeeper to the CDC/NHSN system.* It may take several weeks for the SAMS email to arrive.
3. While you wait for that SAMS email, [Check out this link](#) to understand what to expect once you receive the invite/email from SAMS regarding what identification documents you can use for identity verification/proof.
4. After you have sent your notarized identification documents - per the SAMS instructions, you should receive notice via email once your identity documents have been approved and your SAMS Grid Card is in the mail. Follow the directions in this email.
5. The SAMS Grid Card looks like a credit card and it will come to your home address via the USPS mail. You will use this card and the various codes to log into the NHSN site and access your account.
6. Save all emails and correspondence to verify you have started the process.
7. Please note: the SAMS Card stays with the person, not the facility. If you leave current facility, you take your SAMS Card with you.

### I HAVEN'T RECEIVED THE SAMS INVITE TO UPLOAD MY IDENTITY DOCUMENTS? WHAT CAN I DO?

- Prior to reaching out to NHSN and/ or SAMS, check spam, junk, trash, and inbox email folders for an invitational email from SAMS. Look for an email with the subject line: "SAMS Partner Portal – Identity Verification Request Form" from [SAMS-no-reply@cdc.gov](mailto:SAMS-no-reply@cdc.gov) or [nhsn@cdc.gov](mailto:nhsn@cdc.gov) with the phrase "SAMS Enrollment SAMS L1/L3 Conversion or something similar.
- **If no email is in your email junk, spam, delete, inbox folders and it has been 10 days since the initial request, notify via email.** Keep all your emails and documentation.  
**To:** [nhsn@cdc.gov](mailto:nhsn@cdc.gov) and [samshelp@cdc.gov](mailto:samshelp@cdc.gov)  
**Subject:** "LTCF SAMS Enrollment SAMS L1/L3 Conversion" OR "LTCF SAMS invite for L3 not received."  
**Email Memo:** My name is [NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS] from [FACILITY NAME, CITY, STATE] Facility CCN: [NUMBER], NHSN Facility OrgID [NUMBER]. I have signed the Rules of Behavior on [INSERT DATE IF YOU KNOW]. I was added as a new facility NHSN user. I have NOT received the SAMS invite to proceed for submission of identity proofing documents. I have checked my email spam and junk boxes and do not see any emails from [nhsn@cdc.gov](mailto:nhsn@cdc.gov), SAMS or the [SAMS-no-reply@cdc.gov](mailto:SAMS-no-reply@cdc.gov) email addresses. Please advise and/ or provide me the SAMS invite. Thank you.  
[INSERT SIGNATURE LINE / CONTACT INFORMATION]

### I HAVEN'T RECEIVED MY SAMS GRID CARD? WHAT CAN I DO?

- Once you upload your identity documents per the SAMS instructions; most people are reporting it is not readily apparent if the upload was successful, so this causes one to pause. You can call SAMS at 877-681-2901 or email [samshelp@cdc.gov](mailto:samshelp@cdc.gov) for confirmation of successful document upload and when can you expect your SAMS Grid Card in the mail. If you call, put the call on speaker phone and multi-task until someone answers as you may be on hold for several hours.
- If you have not received your card after 30 days of your identity documents upload, it is time to call or email SAMS to inquire card status. You are going to need to be diligent, proactive, and not let up until you have received your card. Use contact information given above. Keep all emails and documentation.  
**Email:** [samshelp@cdc.gov](mailto:samshelp@cdc.gov) and [nhsn@cdc.gov](mailto:nhsn@cdc.gov)  
**Subject:** SAMS Grid Card not received – Requesting status update.  
**Email Memo:** "My name is [NAME, FACILITY NAME, ADDRESS, FACILITY CCN]. I uploaded my identity proofing documents on [INSERT DATE IF POSSIBLE] and have not received my SAMS Grid Card in the mail. Please advise on card status and if other information is required." Thank you.  
\*\*\*If you have contacted them more than once, provide that information as well, i.e. "This is my third request for follow-up".  
[INSERT SIGNATURE LINE / CONTACT INFORMATION]



## CMS and CDC Updates and Resources

CMS [Section J: Health Conditions - Coding the SPADEs Related to Falls Web-based Training](#) - 2/26/2021

CMS [Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#) - 2/12/2021

CMS [Section N: Medications- Drug Regimen Review Web-based Training](#) -2/12/2021

CDC [Infection Prevention & Control Assessment \(ICAR\) tool for NH Preparing for COVID-19](#) - 1/22/2021

CMS [COVID-19 Partner Toolkit](#)

CDC [New Guidance for TB Test – found in Laboratory Testing Section](#) -1/12/2021

CMS [QSO-20-31-All: Revised COVID-19 Survey Activities, CARES Act Funding, Enhanced Enforcement for Infection Control deficiencies & Quality Improvement Activities in Nursing Homes](#) -1/4/2021

### CDC NHSN COVID-19 Vaccination Resources

- [CDC Long-Term Care Facility Toolkit: Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination at your Facility](#)
- [CDC Preparing Residents for COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Safety Monitoring and Reporting in Your Facility](#)
- [CDC FAQs about COVID-19 Vaccination in LTCFs – Good information here](#)



## The Effects of Colored Plates in Memory Care Dining

The “red plate study” conducted at Boston University in 2004 by researchers Cronin-Golomb and Dunne was designed to assess whether older adults with Alzheimer’s disease would increase their meal consumption from red plates rather than typically used white plates. The study found the red plates to be beneficial; older adults dining from red plates ate 25% more than those dining from white plates. The color contrast was thought to make the foods stand out more visibly for residents with visual impairment, and the color red has been noted to stimulate appetite. Read more here: [McKnights July 28, 2017](#)



## Patient Safety Awareness Week – March 14 - 20, 2021

**Patient Safety Awareness Week** is a great time to acknowledge and celebrate efforts to improve safe care throughout healthcare. The [Center for Patient Safety](#) is joining the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s campaign for Patient Safety Awareness Week](#). Both links provide details and ideas advancing patient/ resident safety. For example, Kootenai Health based in Idaho recognized staff that had a “Good Catch” with Swedish Fish snacks and Goldfish prizes. They had a viewing party of a safety webinar, held a safety fair and poster contest. Another idea from Community Medical Center in Montana had a room occupied by “Miss Mayhem” with a prize for a person who identified all safety issues in the room.

The [IHI Skilled Nursing Facility Trigger Tool for Measuring Adverse Events](#) provides step by step instructions, a list of SNF-specific triggers, examples and an extensive FAQ section. If you are not already registered with IHI, you will need to do so to access the tool. Membership is free!

The [All-Cause Harm Prevention in Nursing Homes Toolkit](#) is a change package that includes successful practices of high-performing nursing homes, illustrating how they prevent harm while honoring each resident’s rights and preferences.





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